

A Statewide Movement

FOR THE

Collection and Preservation *of* Minnesota's War Records



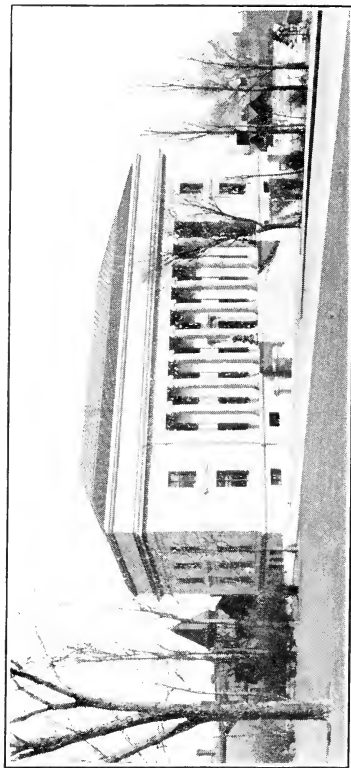
BULLETIN NUMBER ONE

Minnesota War Records Commission
SAINT PAUL, DECEMBER 1, 1918

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STATE HISTORICAL BUILDING

HEADQUARTERS OF THE MINNESOTA WAR RECORDS COMMISSION

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MINNESOTA WAR RECORDS COMMISSION. 150

Dr. Solon J. Buck, superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, chairman.

Dr. Eugene W. Bohannon, president of the State Normal School, Duluth.

Mrs. Marie Brick, librarian, Public Library, Saint Cloud.

Rev. William Busch, professor of church history, Saint Paul Seminary, Saint Paul.

Charles W. Henke, publicity director, Minnesota Commission of Public Safety, Saint Paul.

Dr. John D. Hicks, professor of history, Hamline University, Saint Paul.

Hon. Gideon S. Ives, president of the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul.

Herschel V. Jones, publisher of the *Journal*, Minneapolis.

Gustaf Lindquist, the governor's secretary, Saint Paul.

Adjutant General Walter F. Rhinow, Saint Paul.

Dr. Lester B. Shippee, professor of American history, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Willis M. West, historian, Grand Rapids.

Franklin F. Holbrook, Historical Building, Saint Paul, director.

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MINNESOTA'S WAR HISTORY.

A great task as well as a great opportunity will confront the future historian of this state when he comes to tell the full story of Minnesota's participation in the World War: how she played her part among the free peoples of the world in the fight for world freedom; how she furnished thousands of her sons to the fighting forces of the nation and how these men conducted themselves and what they experienced in camp, at sea, and on the field of battle; how she stood for loyalty at home and suppressed the Hun within her gates; how she readjusted her whole course of life, giving abundantly of her means, her substance, her thought, her time, her strength, her prayers, sacrificing luxuries and making spare use of the necessities of life, and, forgetting all petty rivalries, united in efforts put forth for the winning of the war, for the welfare of the fighters, and for the relief of war-stricken peoples; and how in other and less obvious ways the war altered the direction and character of her normal interests and pursuits.

Such a story will constitute a unique and important chapter in the history of our state. It will be of interest not only to

coming generations of Minnesotans, but also to us who have lived and worked in these stirring times, conscious that we were helping in the accomplishment of great things, but too intent upon the performance of our own special and more or less limited tasks to take a comprehensive view of the course of events in our state, and perhaps even in our own localities.

Our War History Materials Should Be Gathered Now.

But if Minnesota's war history is to record adequately the achievements of which Minnesotans are justly so proud, steps must be taken, and taken at once, to gather so far as possible into public depositories, and at least to ensure the preservation of, the data, the records, and the relics which will be needed for the production of that history and which in themselves will be increasingly treasured mementoes of the unprecedented happenings of the days just passing. The governments of the European nations involved in the great conflict, from the very beginning and while actually carrying on the struggle, have made provision for the immediate and systematic building up of war libraries and museums containing every conceivable kind of record relating to the sacrifices and deeds of their respective peoples. Canada and Canadian provinces have done likewise, and since the United States entered the war a constantly growing num-

ber of states have officially recognized the importance of collecting and preserving their local war records and have inaugurated statewide movements for the attainment of that end.

The Minnesota War Records Commission.

With these facts in mind, the governor recently appointed a body called the Minnesota War Records Commission, whose duty it is to arouse in Minnesota a due appreciation of the value of her war records, to point out the great variety and extent of the materials which may properly be considered "war records," and to organize and direct a statewide movement for their collection and permanent preservation.

To fulfill its mission completely, the Commission must look for the voluntary assistance of public spirited citizens in every community throughout the state. The general plan is to appoint a local representative, or COUNTY CHAIRMAN, in every county, who will organize and direct the work of collecting that county's war records. In most cases the County Chairman will need the help of other local people whom he will associate with him as a COUNTY WAR RECORDS COMMITTEE, and as local representatives or committees in the outlying towns and districts of the county according to the particular circumstances. In both the work of organization and collection the

Commission aims to keep in close touch with its County Chairman, offering suggestions and encouragement and receiving reports from time to time on the progress of the work.

The organization of the counties is now in progress. The response to the Commission's appeal, together with independent suggestions and comment appearing daily in the columns of our newspapers, indicates that the time is ripe for the launching of a "war records drive" in this state. In fact the action of the Commission has been anticipated in at least one Minnesota county, Freeborn, where the register of deeds on his own initiative has for some weeks been gathering data on the individual military records of the soldiers from that county.

What Is Meant by War Records.

Broadly considered, Minnesota's war records may be held to include all the material, of whatever variety of origin, content, or form, which in any way relates to the lives and deeds of Minnesota men in the military service, to the many forms of civilian war service performed locally, and to the altered course of life in Minnesota communities during the war period. The Commission, therefore, urges the collection and preservation of the following broad classes of material:

1. Military Service Records.

Materials relating to the history of military units, training camps and schools where Minnesota men have been gathered in numbers.

Individual records of the men from each county in the military service of the federal and state governments during American participation in the World War.

For compiling these records the Commission has prepared a form of record calling for specific information about the individual soldier's military career, and about his civil status before and immediately following his term of service. A copy of this form will be supplied by the Commission for every soldier included in this class.

Individual records of such men from each county as served in the armed forces of foreign belligerent nations at any time during the World War from its beginning in August, 1914.

A modification of the above-mentioned form will probably be used in compiling these records when the number and distribution of these men is ascertained.

Of equal importance with the compiling of the above formal records is the collection of individual and group photographs of Minnesota soldiers and sailors, their letters from camps and from overseas, newspapers and other publications issued at camps or by units where local men were found in numbers, diaries, photographs of military scenes, souvenirs, insignia, tro-

phies, and other ready-made records of their life in the service.

2. Records of the War Services of Individual Civilians.

Individual records of such men and women from each county as engaged in nonmilitary forms of national or state war service outside the county, such as work for the Red Cross, Y. M. C. A., Food Administration, or Department of Justice.

A special form may be used in compiling these records when the number and distribution of the people in question is ascertained.

3. Records of Home Community War Activities and Conditions.

Directory of all local agencies and of all local branches of state and national agencies in each county engaged in war activities, including the names and addresses of officers and of leading agents or workers, and the names of members where practicable.

In addition to being of historical value, such a record will be of immediate service to the war records organization in locating and collecting the ready-made records described below.

Written reports upon the war activities of the various local agencies, organizations, and institutions, and upon the progress within the county of the more or less informal and slightly organized movements of the period, with special attention to cases where adequate records of the ready-made variety indicated below are not available.

Ready-made records of local activities.

By "ready-made" records is meant that sort of material which is produced independently of the war records organization, in connection with the actual conduct of the activities in question. These records have only to be gathered or preserved. Following are suggestive lists (1) of agencies producing such records and (2) of various forms in which they appear. By referring from each item in one list to all the items in the other, one may gain a working conception of the ready-made records to be found in greater or less quantity in every community:

(1) RECORD PRODUCING AGENCIES.

Official.	Semi-official.
Public safety organization	Red Cross
Food administration	Y. M. C. A.
Fuel administration	War Camp Community Service
Draft boards	Jewish Welfare Board
Employment bureaus	Y. W. C. A.
Liberty Loan committees	Knights of Columbus
W. S. S. campaigns	Salvation Army
Recruiting offices	American Library Association
Regular local authorities	Boy Scouts

Non-official.

Public meetings	Commercial bodies
Patriotic societies	Professional societies
War relief enterprises	Labor organizations
Americanization committees	Farmers' clubs
Loyalty leagues	Printing shops
Churches and religious societies	Photographic studios
Schools and colleges	Banks and trust companies
Political parties and candidates	Business firms
Libraries	Factories and mills
Women's clubs	Mining companies
Fraternal organizations	Public service corporations
Hyphenated associations	Individuals

In explanation of the comprehensive character of the foregoing list, with special reference to the non-official agencies named, it may be pointed out that the records of these agencies will be needed for information not only about the part taken by a community in the war, but also about how the community was itself affected by wartime conditions, with respect to its education, religion, commerce, finance, politics, industry, agriculture, living conditions, customs, habits of thought, and other matters of vital interest.

(2) VARIOUS FORMS OF READY-MADE RECORDS.

Printed Matter.

Books	War songs
Newspapers	Sermons
Magazines	Addresses
Pamphlets	Proclamations
Handbooks	Appeals
Bulletins	Posters
Directories	Placards
Constitutions	Handbills
Ordinances	Circular letters
Resolutions	Catalogs
Programs	Price lists
Memorials	Advertisements
Honor rolls	Recipes
War poetry	Blank forms
Librettos	Letterheads

Manuscript material.

Minutes of proceedings	Letters of individuals
Correspondence files	Household budgets
Written reports	Farm records
Account books	Manuscripts of speeches, poems, songs, etc.
Personal diaries	

Pictorial records.

Photographs	Drawings
Kodak views	Paintings
Motion pictures	Maps
Films and plates	Cartoons
Sketches	Hand-made posters

Mementoes.

Badges	Souvenirs
Pins	Medals
Banners	Trophies
Pennants	Military equipment
Service flags	

Some of this material may at first thought seem commonplace and even trivial, but that that will not be the case fifty or a hundred years from now will be appreciated by everyone who reflects upon the interest attaching to the relics of Civil War days and of the period of the American Revolution.

Suggestions for County War Records Committees.

The Commission makes the following very general suggestions for the guidance of the county chairmen and committees in organizing the counties and formulating plans of campaign at the outset, leaving the details of special problems for consideration in circular letters to be issued by the Commission from time to time as the work progresses. The local committees will at all times, however, be encouraged to apply the suggestions of the Commission with whatever modifications the peculiar needs of the local situation may call for. In fact the success of the movement will depend very largely upon the initiative and resourcefulness shown by the local organizations in solving their own special problems. The Commission's chief concern is the getting of results.

Personnel of Committees.

It is suggested that county chairmen include on their committees such people as librarians, teachers of history, editors, and representatives of leading war agencies including local draft boards.

Division of Work.

The war records work in the county should be so divided that each active worker have one or more definite tasks to perform.

A good plan, if enough people can be interested, is to divide the county into sections small enough so that each section can be canvassed by one person and to assign to some person the responsibility of collecting all the varieties of data and records available in that section. This is the method used by the "block system" type of organization and is particularly serviceable for getting at the sort of data and records to be found for the most part in private homes.

Or the work might be divided on the basis of classes of records, distributing among the workers the responsibility of compiling the data on the war services of individuals and of collecting the classes of ready-made records severally designated on page 12 above as printed matter, manuscript material, pictorial records, and mementoes.

Again, in collecting the records of home community war activities, each worker might be asked to collect all the available records relating to the war activities or condition of a few specified local agencies, organizations, or institutions.

Other methods, perhaps involving combinations of the foregoing, will suggest themselves to the county committees.

Co-operating Agencies.

County committees will do well to make full use of the special facilities afforded by other local organizations and institutions such as the local branches of the public safety organization, draft boards, commercial clubs, public libraries, schools, churches, newspapers, pioneer associations, Red Cross and D. A. R. chapters.

The local newspapers may be of special service in giving to the work the publicity so essential to any movement depending upon the interest and co-operation of large numbers of people. The writing of articles and notices for publication locally might well be made the special business of some member of the county committee.

From local public safety associations, county boards, commercial clubs, interested individuals, or from other possible sources, the county committees ought to be able to obtain assistance in defraying such expenses as the successful conduct of the work may entail. County committees in other states have in many instances been thus aided.

As the Minnesota Public Safety Commission is backing the war records movement, its county directors will doubtless co-operate with the local war records committees to the extent of their ability.

Collection of Records.

While the program of the Commission calls for the collection of all available war records in each county, it is desirable that first attention be given to those described as follows:

Military service records of men from each county in the service of the federal and state governments during American participation in the war (see page 8). The blank form supplied by the Commission for the records of men of this class should be filled out and completed in each case as soon as circumstances permit. The desired information may be obtained from the draft boards, from the families and friends of the soldiers, from the soldiers themselves, or from any other reliable source at hand.

Records of special wartime agencies which have completed or will soon complete their work. An immediate canvass should be made of the situation with respect to the records of these agencies with a view of securing samples of every bit of printed or other matter issued by them for general distribution, and of acquiring, whenever possible, the custody of their office files and records.

Newspapers. The local newspaper is the most comprehensive record of local activities and conditions. Files of all newspapers published in the county during the war

should therefore be secured. If such files are not already on deposit in the libraries or other public depositories of the county, they should be made up of files or copies secured as soon as possible from the publishers, from individuals, or from whatever source obtainable. If possible, duplicate files should be secured for the purpose of clipping and making into scrapbooks the articles and items of local war interest.

Printed and other publicity matter issued by all the various local agencies listed on page 12. Much of this material is ephemeral in character and is likely to disappear soon after its momentary practical usefulness is over. Early visits to the local printing shops, where samples of job work are usually allowed to accumulate for some time, will probably yield much material of this description which has not yet been destroyed. It may also be picked up here and there in the community if a careful search is made now.

Photographs and kodak views. Popular interest in the war records work may be greatly stimulated by the early collection and display of pictures illustrative of local war activities. Both the professional and amateur photographers of the county should be urged to contribute such pictures, carefully dated and labelled, to the county war collection.

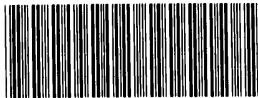
Disposition of the War Records.

As a general rule the Commission will encourage the county committees to use such of the records collected by them as are chiefly local in character in the building up of COUNTY WAR COLLECTIONS, if the necessary arrangements can be made for their proper care and preservation locally. Usually the leading county library, the courthouse, or other local depository will afford the necessary facilities. The **military service records**, however, for which forms are supplied by the state, are to be sent ultimately to the Commission, though county committees are urged to provide similar records for the county collections.

There will also be built up a STATE WAR COLLECTION composed in general of records relating to the war activities of the state as a whole. This collection will include records emanating from the state headquarters of the various agencies and interests in the state, together with representative material relating to war activities and conditions in the several communities of the state. County committees are therefore asked to forward to the Commission all material secured by them which is of more than local significance, or which for any other reason should be filed in the main collection. The local committees are also urged to send to the Commission such duplicate local material as may be gathered

in the course of building up the county collections. All records acquired by the Commission will be deposited with the state collection already begun by the Minnesota Historical Society, in the Historical Building at St. Paul.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



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